Testimony Submitted to the General Law Committee

In Support of: Raised Bill No. 132
An Act Concerning Landscape Architects

Submitted By: Christopher J. Ferrero RLA, Legislative Committee Chair, Connecticut Chapter of The American Society of Landscape Architects

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Senator Colapietro, Representative Shapiro and members of the General Law Committee, my name is Chris Ferrero. I am a licensed landscape architect, owner of Ferrero Hixon Associates in Simsbury, and chair my professional chapter's legislative committee.

I appreciate the opportunity to testify before you today on behalf of Connecticut's Landscape Architects. This would be our third year of attempting to pass the language contained in SB 132. These minor language changes will clarify an ownership structure issue that has come to our attention over the last number of years.

We have been worked collaboratively with the groups most affected by these modifications including Connecticut's Civil Engineers, Surveyors and Architects. We are proud to say we believe we have succeeded in garnering the support of all groups for this legislative modification.

The issue revolves around the Joint Practice of Civil Engineering, Surveying, and Landscape Architecture in a multi-discipline firm environment. Currently the chapter regulating such activities for civil engineers and surveyors, chapter 391, prescribes ownership requirements that must be met by the participating joint practice professionals in order to legally practice as a joint venture. The profession of landscape architecture is not included in any of this joint practice language. This chapter currently mandates that a minimum of two thirds of a joint practice company be owned by engineers, architects and surveyors, and that a minimum of twenty percent of the company must be owned by at least one member of each of the disciplines forming the company. Since the profession of landscape architecture is not included in this chapter, it precludes landscape architects in Connecticut from owning more than a thirty percent share in a multidisciplinary joint practice firm. Therefore if a firm contains landscape architects and civil engineers and or surveyors, where a landscape architect owns more than one third of the voting stock, this firm would be operating illegally according to chapter 391. There are examples of firms operating under this condition in the state that I know of, and whose attorney's have pointed out this situation to them as potentially problematic.

Our recommended modifications to section 306b include provisions which would allow landscape architects the ability to form joint practice companies under the same provisions that currently exist in the engineering and surveying professions. We have worked to achieve consensus with the Connecticut Engineers in Private Practice (CEPP), the Connecticut chapter of the American Institute of Architects (CTAIA), and Connecticut Association of Land

Surveyors (CALS) on this issue. Based on these discussions it has been made clear that it is not the intent of any group, or chapter 391, to prohibit a landscape architectural ownership joint practice configuration. A letter of support has been submitted along with this testimony from CEPP on the language currently proposed. These proposed changes will allow "one or more" of these professionals, including the profession of Landscape Architecture, to meet the minimum ownership requirements of a joint practice corporation or LLC. We at the Connecticut Chapter of The American Society of Landscape Architects look forward to your review and thank you for your time.

Thank you very much for allowing me to testify today.